



Localities with Casinos Very Unlikely to be a Target for Attack, Likely to See Increased Crime, and Needs for Increased Social Services after Legalization of Gambling in Virginia

(U) Scope Note: This product is intended for the local officials and public safety personnel where casino gambling facilities are planning to be built, to assist with planning, security, and allocation of resources for possible increased crime rates and need for increased access to social services. For purposes of this product, the use of the term “casino facility” will be used to represent a variety of establishments that encompass horseracing, games of chance, and traditional gambling games.

(U) Executive Summary: The Virginia Fusion Center (VFC) Shield Program¹ assesses increased crime, and an increased need for social services is likely once casino facility locations are operational. Although unlikely, the VFC Shield Program also assesses that casinos make an attractive target for mass casualty attacks. The VFC Shield Program makes this assessment with medium to high confidence based on a variety of open source articles, national and local news media, and scholarly works on the subject of gambling and casinos’ effects on individuals and communities.

(U) Key Judgments:

- **(U) It is almost certain that there will be an increase of property crimes and crimes of opportunity in areas where casino facilities are immediately located.**
- **(U) It is very likely that areas with casino facilities will see an increase in the need for social services, including addiction, and personal bankruptcy support.**
- **(U) It is likely that criminal actors will target casino facilities with cyber-attacks.**
- **(U) Although very unlikely, casino facilities could be an attractive target for terrorist attacks and independent lone actors (ILA).**

(U) Substantiation:

(U) It is almost certain that there will be an increase of property crimes and crimes of opportunity in areas where casino facilities are immediately located. Areas with casino facilities will make attractive targets for individuals who are looking to commit crime for financial gain due to consumers moving around the area with possible large amounts of money or valuables. This is compounded if victims have consumed alcohol, as they will be seen as easier targets. These crimes of opportunity will put increased strain on public safety response, particularly if the interactions turn violent. Parking lots and/or garages will make attractive targets for thieves looking to conduct thefts from motor vehicles. These areas are usually not secured, sparsely populated, and not monitored by security cameras.

Good relationships between local public safety and owners/managers of casino facilities will be crucial. Crime prevention through environmental design will be beneficial as facilities are being built or updated, and periodic safety assessments with a law enforcement officer certified as a Crime Prevention Specialist through the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) will assist in making facilities safe for workers and patrons alike. The program is a tool to enhance the marketing of economic development and tourism in localities. It also strengthens the professionalism of city or county management and local law

enforcement agencies by showing that the locality can meet rigorous standards related to community safety.ⁱⁱ

(U) It is very likely that areas with casino facilities will see an increase in the need for social services, including addiction services, and personal bankruptcy support. Research from scholarly works suggests that legalized gambling activities constituted one of the leading causes of business and personal bankruptcies among South Dakota residents within two years.ⁱⁱⁱ The same study also suggests that addicted gamblers will turn their “consumer dollars” to “gambling dollars,” thus affecting traditional businesses in the area.^{iv} With a person’s financial stability at a decline due to a gambling addiction, there could be an increase in substance abuse, mental illness, and even suicide.^v Mental health services and personal financial services will likely see an increase in patronage and will likely need increased funding to help the growing consumer base.

(U) It is likely that criminal actors will target casino facilities with cyber-attacks. Casinos can draw in millions of dollars a year, thus making them an attractive soft target for cybercriminal actors. Cybercriminal actors will use common techniques, like email phishing and coding, to exploit vulnerabilities and install ransomware.^{vi} These attacks can even shut down casino operations for days and cost millions in operation disruptions and the theft of sensitive data.^{vii}

Cybercriminals can focus on attempting to get personal identifying information (PII), banking, and credit card information through a variety of methods, including spoofing Wi-Fi hotspots and compromised point of sale terminals. These are particularly troublesome for hotel-casinos.^{viii}

Employee training, both initial upon hiring and periodic refreshers and additional cyber-security measures for these facilities will be needed to help curtail these cyber intrusions. While these could be costly up front, they could potentially save the casino establishments from these costly types of attacks.

(U) Although very unlikely, casino facilities could be an attractive target for terrorist attacks and independent lone actors (ILA). Based on a 2010 US Department of Homeland Security report, casinos make an attractive target for attacks due to the open public access, limited egress congregation points, and common security vulnerabilities.^{ix} These attacks could be from Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs), Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVEs), or Independent Lone Actors (ILAs) looking to further their ideology, or personal grievances. Methods and tactics of attack may look the same between FTOs, HVEs, and ILAs. These methods may be shootings, improvised explosive devices, stabbings, and vehicle attacks.

Independent Lone Actors (ILAs) have been called a terrorist threat in the United States, and their attacks are more deadly than traditional US terrorist attacks because of strong counterterrorism practices in place.^x Studies show no uniform demographics amongst ILAs other than an overwhelming representation of male perpetrators.^{xi} There have been many scholarly works looking into ILAs. Their assessments agree that perceived grievances are a key driver that lead ILAs to violent attacks. These grievances can be ideological or personal.^{xii} ILAs can create their own unique ideologies that combine personal frustrations and aversions with political, social, or religious grievances. In a 2019 report from the FBI’s National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, 69% of ILAs had “an identifiable primary grievance, defined as a real or perceived injustice or feeling of being wronged.”^{xiii} The same study showed that offenders shared letters, social media postings, or posted videos detailing their grievances in weeks, months, and years before committing a violent act.^{xiv} This type of behavior is often referred to as leakage.

(U) Outlook:

(U) While the casino facilities around the Commonwealth may provide an economic boost to localities and tourism, it is likely that these establishments will be attractive for criminal activities or, for individuals inspired by FTOs, HVEs, or ILAs, a significant public platform to increase notoriety. Criminal cyber actors

are likely to continue to see casino facilities as attractive targets for financial gain. Despite these factors, nothing at the time of this writing indicates disruptive or hostile activities are planned for Virginia-based gambling facilities.

(U) Implications:

(U) As these establishments become operational, key statistics from local public safety agencies, in reference to call volumes, investigations, and suspicious activity reporting, will be captured. These statistics will help further more accurate intelligence on the effects of these establishments on their communities, and assist in allocating resources for public safety, social services, and physical security.

(U) Intelligence Gaps:

- (U) Will there be an increase in organized criminal activity from street gangs, or other criminal actors using casinos as a method to transform money received through illicit means, into legitimate gains?
- (U) Are there currently any FTOs, HVEs, or ILAs contemplating using these establishments as targets for attack?
- (U) Are the current social services in place sufficient to meet the possible incoming demand, or does additional funding for social services need to be allocated?

(U) Analysis of Alternatives:

(U) The VFC Shield Program used the structured analytical technique of Argument Mapping, where an alternative analysis revealed that gambling establishments would not have an effect on local communities where they are operating. The VFC Shield Program judges this alternative analysis as very unlikely given the lack of evidence to support this judgment. However, there always remain unknown factors that could develop into an increased likelihood of this alternative outcome. Should this potential outcome develop, the VFC Shield Program anticipates the observed following indicators:

- (U) Increased funding/alertness of public safety needs to the areas being considered for casino establishments.
- (U) Establishment of trainings for casino employees to report suspicious activity and indicators of criminal activity.

(U) Appendices:

(U) Appendix A: Expressions of Likelihood (or Probability)

(U) Phrases such as “the VFC Shield Program assesses” and terms such as “likely” and “probably” convey analytical judgments and assessments. The chart approximates how expressions of likelihood and probability correlate with percentages of chance.

<i>Terms of Likelihood</i>	Almost No Chance	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Roughly Even Chance	Likely	Very Likely	Almost Certain(ly)
<i>Terms of Probability</i>	Remote	Highly Improbable	Improbable (Improbably)	Roughly Even Odds	Probable (Probably)	Highly Probable	Near Certain
	1-5%	5-20%	20-45%	45-55%	55-80%	80-95%	95-99%

(U) Appendix B: Confidence in Sources Supporting Assessments and Judgments

(U) Confidence levels reflect the quality and quantity of the source information supporting the judgment. Consequently, the VFC Shield Program ascribes high, medium, or low levels of confidence to assessments as follows:

(U) **High confidence** generally indicates the VFC Shield Program's judgments are based on high-quality information from multiple sources. High confidence in a judgment does not imply the assessment is a fact or a certainty; such judgments might be wrong. While additional reporting and information sources may change analytical judgments, such changes are most likely to be refinements and not substantial in nature.

(U) **Medium confidence** generally means the information is credibly sourced and plausible but not of sufficient quality, quantity, or corroborated sufficiently to warrant a higher level of confidence. Additional reporting or information sources have the potential to increase the VFC Shield Program's confidence levels or substantively change analytical judgments.

(U) **Low confidence** generally means the information's credibility or plausibility is uncertain, the information is too fragmented or poorly corroborated to make solid analytical inferences, or the reliability of the sources is questionable. Absent additional reporting or information sources, analytical judgments should be considered preliminary in nature.

(U) End Notes

ⁱ (U) [Virginia Fusion Center Shield Program](#)

ⁱⁱ (U) DCJS: [Crime Prevention](#). 2022

ⁱⁱⁱ (U) Kindt, John Warren: [The Business-Economic Impacts of Licensed Casino Gambling in West Virginia: Short-Term Gain but Long-Term Pain](#), 1994.

^{iv} (U) Kindt, John Warren: [The Business-Economic Impacts of Licensed Casino Gambling in West Virginia: Short-Term Gain but Long-Term Pain](#), 1994.

^v (U) Matthews, Dylan: Washington Post: [Studies: Casino bring jobs, but also crime, bankruptcy, and even suicide](#). October 30, 2012.

^{vi} (U) O'Conner, Devin: [FBI Cyber Crime Division Warns Tribal Casinos About Ongoing Threats](#). November 6, 2021.

^{vii} (U) Artic Wolf: [Casino Cybersecurity: A Winning Bet](#). April 6, 2022

^{viii} (U) UpGuard Team: [All Bets Are Off on Casinos and Cybersecurity](#). August 25, 2021.

^{ix} (U) U.S. Department of Homeland Security: [Commercial Facilities Sector-Specific Plan: An Annex to the National Infrastructure Protection Plan](#). 2010.

^x (U) FBI; [Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing, and Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks](#), July 2015.

^{xi} (U) FBI: [Lone Offender: A Study of Lone Offender Terrorism in the United States](#), November 2019.

^{xii} (U) FBI; [Making Prevention a Reality: Identifying, Assessing, and Managing the Threat of Targeted Attacks](#), July 2015.

^{xiii} (U) FBI: [Lone Offender: A Study of Lone Offender Terrorism in the United States](#), November 2019.

^{xiv} (U) FBI: [Lone Offender: A Study of Lone Offender Terrorism in the United States](#), November 2019.

(U) Gambling Establishment Locations in Virginia, as of April 22, 2022

Type

- Forthcoming Casino (4)
- Forthcoming Gambling Establishment (1)
- Existing Gambling Establishment (6)
- Proposed Casino (2)

